



2005 Grassland Reserve Program

Customer Focus

The Miner Farm is the first Grassland Reserve Program easement purchased in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. The easement will permanently protect 16 acres of pasture on the 61-acre farm, purchased for \$157,328 in late April 2005. The purchase of the Miner farm conservation easement will provide permanent protection for the land and protect it from conversion to non-grassland uses.

Bob Miner's father, Charles signed his conservation plan in 1949 and the Soil Conservation Service designed the farm pond on the property in the fifties. The Miner farm raises various livestock, horses, chickens and exotic birds. The multi-generation family is certainly committed to conservation.

Dick Coombe, Regional Assistant Chief for the East, joined the partners from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM), Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and the Hopkinton Land Trust, to announce the preservation of the historic farm at a media event held in June.

Rhode Island Summary

Overview

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property. Section 2401 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize this program. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and Forest Service are coordinating implementation of GRP, which helps landowners restore and protect grassland, pastureland, and certain other lands and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands.

Accomplishments

In Fiscal Year 2005, Congress appropriated \$75 million nationwide for GRP. Rhode Island received an allocation of \$1,372,081 for the purchase of conservation easements, and funding rental agreements and restoration needs. RI received nine applications for GRP in 2005, and has obligated or committed funds to three projects: one permanent easement on 36 acres in South Kingstown, one 30-year easement on 19 acres in Little Compton, and one rental agreement on 30 acres in Middletown. Easement acquisition activities are underway for these two easement projects. To acquire an easement, NRCS must solicit assistance from the private sector to secure appraisals, survey easement boundaries, complete title review, and prepare for and conduct the closing.

Using funds allocated in 2004, RI NRCS completed the purchase of two GRP permanent conservation easements: one 16 acre easement in Hopkinton (see sidebar), and one 31 acre easement in Foster. Both farms will also receive cost share assistance on grassland enhancement activities, such as rotational grazing, fencing, livestock watering systems, brush management to control invasive species, and nutrient and pest management. These farms forever maintained as valuable grassland habitat and forage, as well as be protected from development.

Outlook

Nationally, the Grasslands Reserve Program has reached the funding cap authorized by Congress in the 2002 Farm Bill. As such, no additional funding is expected for the program in 2006. Easement acquisition work will continue on the two easements approved for funding in 2005.

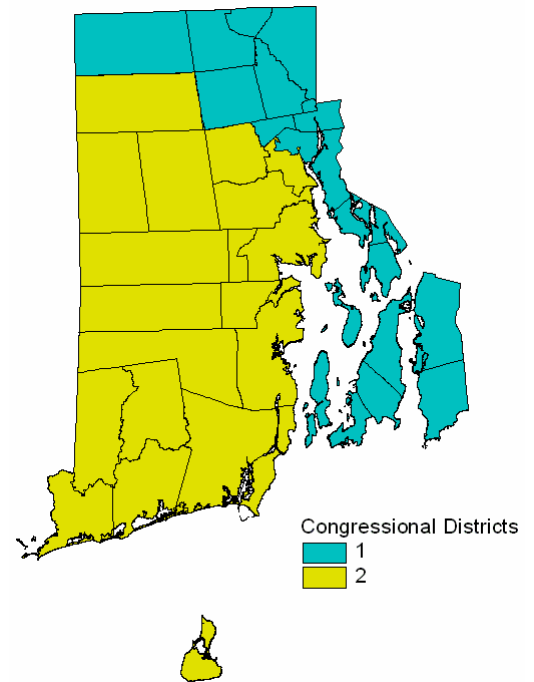
State Contact:

Vicky Drew, GRP Manager, 60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46, Warwick, Rhode Island 02886
Phone 401-822-8840 Fax 401-828-0433 Vicky.drew@ri.usda.gov, www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov

The Miner Farm, GRP easement



Rhode Island's GRP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District



Rhode Island's Grassland Reserve Program Activities

Fiscal Year 2005			Cumulative Total (1996 – 2005)	
Congressional Districts	GRP Dollars	Number of Farms to be preserved	GRP Dollars	Number of farms projected to be preserved
District 1	851,672	3	1,686,672	9
District 2	400,000	2	2,574,300	14
State Totals	1,251,672	5	4,260,972	23

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